



Energy and Environmental Affairs

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Baker-Polito Administration Awards \$250,000 for Drought Water Conservation Projects at Massachusetts Farms

BOSTON – The Baker-Polito Administration today awarded 18 grants totaling \$250,000 to Massachusetts farmers for the installation of water conservation projects, in response to the unprecedented drought during the 2016 growing season. Through the Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources' (MDAR) Agricultural Environmental Enhancement Program (AEEP), these grants will help farms across the Commonwealth fund projects like the installation of automated irrigations systems and tailwater recovery for cranberry operations, drip irrigation and wells, and water re-use projects.

"Water conservation is an important part of a successful farming operation, especially following last year's rain conditions across the Commonwealth," **said Governor Charlie Baker**. "The water conservation grants we are providing today will help Massachusetts farms withstand future dry weather conditions, and continue to be successful for generations to come."

"We are pleased to offer resources to help our hardworking farmers adapt their operations to be better prepare for future conditions," **said Lieutenant Governor Karyn Polito**. "It is a priority of our administration to ensure Massachusetts communities and their farmers are able to withstand the effects of severe weather events."

"Projects funded from these grants will not only assist small, agricultural businesses to become more environmentally responsible, but will also aid in a more financially sustainable future," **said Energy and Environmental Affairs Secretary Matthew Beaton**. "This assistance illustrates the Baker-Polito Administration's ongoing support for the Commonwealth's important agricultural industry, which provides fresh, healthy food for our state's residents and beyond."

This round of AEEP specifically funds water conservation projects. Selected farmers are reimbursed for the approved costs of materials and labor up to \$25,000.

"The Agricultural Environmental Enhancement Program is a valuable tool to help our Massachusetts farmers implement environmentally responsible practices," **said MDAR Commissioner John Lebeaux**. "I congratulate these recipients who have each shown a commitment to improving Massachusetts' environment and conserving our natural resources."

"The continued support of AEEP by the Baker-Polito Administration represents their commitment to the long-term viability of agriculture in the Commonwealth, and our cranberry growers are appreciative for that investment," **said Brian Wick, Executive Director of the Cape Cod Cranberry Growers' Association**.

AEEP is one of several programs within MDAR's Division of Agricultural Conservation and Technical Assistance (DACTA), whose mission is to advance the conservation and utilization of agricultural resources through preservation, environmental stewardship, technology, technical assistance and education in order to enhance the viability of agricultural enterprises and safeguard natural resources. AEEP has funded over 500 projects statewide since 1999, providing growers and producers over \$6 million dollars to help address environmental concerns on their farms.

The following farms received grants:

Community	Farm Name	Awarded Amount
Berkley	Couto Cranberries	\$13,250
Carver	Edgewood Bogs, LLC	\$10,000
Carver	S.K. Wainio Bogs, Inc.	\$20,000
Carver	Weston Bros. Cranberries, LLC	\$14,000
Cohasset	Friends of Holly Hill Farm, Inc.	\$4,500
Concord	Barrett's Mill Farm	\$15,000
Dracut	Farmer Dave's, LLC	\$20,000
Duxbury	Doyle Cranberry Co.	\$18,100
East Falmouth	Dale Tree Movers & Tree Farm, LLC	\$3,350
Holyoke	Nuestras Raices, Inc.	\$18,000
Lakeville	Betty's Neck Farm, Inc.	\$12,500

Lunenburg	Lakeview Nurseries	\$20,000
Needham	Volante Farms, Inc.	\$7,650
Plymouth	E.J. Pontiff Cranberries, Inc.	\$15,725
Rochester	Beaton's, Inc.	\$22,500
Rutland	Jordan Dairy Farm, Inc.	\$17,225
Tyngsboro	Lawndale Farm	\$3,200
Upton	Fivefork Farms	\$15,000

"Many farms across the Commonwealth struggled to get through the historic drought that hit Massachusetts," **said State Senator Anne Gobi (D-Spencer), Senate Chair of the Joint Committee on Environment, Natural Resources and Agriculture.** "I am glad to see that the Baker-Polito Administration is providing resources to small farms for water conservation projects, so they can be properly prepared to withstand future drought conditions. Congratulations to Jordan Dairy Farm in Rutland for being selected as a grant recipient."

"I wish to thank the Baker-Polito Administration and MDAR for designating funds to address the detrimental effects this drought has had on farms across the Commonwealth," **said State Representative Kimberly Ferguson (R-Holden).** "This is yet another example of the true partnership between the Administration and farming communities and I am thrilled that Jordan Dairy Farm in Rutland was chosen as a recipient."

"The Baker-Polito Administration's efforts to increase farm viability through water conservation improvements is incredibly helpful to farmers in the SouthCoast," **said State Senator Michael Rodrigues (D-Westport).** "Innovative projects such as these will increase farm efficiency and sustainability, and help support a new generation of farmers for the future."

"The AEEP grant announcements come as welcome news for our hard working farmers," **said State Representative Keiko Orrall (R-Lakeville).** "I appreciate the Baker-Polito Administration's commitment to preserving precious water resources by supporting these improvements."

To aid farmers during dry conditions last year, the Baker-Polito Administration launched the [Massachusetts Drought Emergency Loan Fund](#) , which provided up to \$1 million in micro-loans to family farms and other small businesses affected by widespread drought conditions in Massachusetts.